Listing of the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows and replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application with the following listing of claims:

1-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method for providing simultaneous context based audio interaction among a plurality of participants in a network based gaming environment, the method comprising:

using a single centralized game server configured to host a single instance of a dynamic, multi-user, network based game to establish a network based game environment containing identifications for a plurality of game participants, the game comprising integrated voice over internet protocol communication capabilities;

maintaining a game state profile for each one of the game participant identifications at the game server, each game state profile comprising game specific context for a given game participant identification;

~~using the game server to identify a plurality of groups of participant identifications based solely upon the maintained game state profiles, each group comprising a plurality of participant identifications having within the game state profiles a shared game context comprising parameters or attributes that permit audio communication among the game participants associated with those participant identifications;~~

using solely the game server to send instructions to a conference server separate from the game server [[and]] to establish a plurality of simultaneous and independent voice over internet protocol based audio conferences within the network based game environment, all of the audio conferences contained within the single network based game instance, each audio conference comprising a group of participant identifications, each group comprising a plurality of participant identifications having a shared game context within the game state profiles comprising parameters or attributes that permit audio communication among the game participants associated with those participant

identifications and audio paths between a plurality of geographically distributed audio mixers and communication devices associated with each game participant identification in that group;

~~associated with one of the identified groups of participant identifications and permitting audio communication for the participants associated with the associated group of participant identifications;~~

~~using the conference server to establish an audio path between a plurality of geographically distributed audio mixers and communication devices associated with each game participant in one of the audio conferences solely in response to the instructions sent from the game server, each audio mixer separate from the game participants, game server and conference server; and~~

using the [[established]] audio paths for the permitted audio communications among game participants; and

using the game server to switch participants among the audio conferences seamlessly and dynamically during the single network based game instance and non-disruptively to the single network based game instance and any of the audio conferences;

wherein the participant identifications in each group are selected by the game server based solely upon the maintained game state profiles the conference server used to establish audio paths between the plurality of geographically distributed audio mixers and communication devices associated with each game participant in one of the audio conferences solely in response to the instructions sent from the game server, each audio mixer separate from the communication devices associated with each game participant, game server and conference server.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein the game specific context comprises a common communication medium, membership in a group, telepathic connections or a shared language.

15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of maintaining a game state

profile comprises maintaining a game state profile for each participant in each one of a plurality of distributed game servers associated with each participant.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein at least one participant identification is simultaneously contained in at least two identified groups of participant identifications and the associated game participant participates simultaneously in at least two of the independent audio conferences.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, further comprising modifying one of the groups of participants based upon changes in the game state profiles of game participants in the group.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of modifying the group of participants comprises removing participants or adding participants from the audio conference associated with that group of participants.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein each audio conference comprises a session initiation protocol based audio conference and the step of using the game server to switch participants among the audio conferences further comprises[[ing]] ~~dynamically switching at least one participant between two distinct groups~~ using session initiation protocol signaling messages to switch participants among the audio conferences.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein the game server comprises a back-to-back user agent and maintains audio conferences on behalf of the game participants, instructing the conference server to set up each media path to point to the

communication device of each game participant.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, further comprising identifying a feature vector between each pair of participants in each audio conference, each feature vector comprising direction and distance information between a given pair of participants; and using the feature vectors to modify audio signals exchanged between pairs of participants within a given audio conference;
wherein the audio feature vector comprises information about distance, direction, communication medium, transmission frequency or transmission amplitude.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising modifying the audio feature vector in response to changes in the game state profiles of the audio conference participants.

26. (Currently Amended) A non-transitory computer readable medium containing a computer executable code that when read by a computer causes the computer to perform a method for providing simultaneous context based audio interaction among a plurality of participants in a network based gaming environment, the method comprising:
using a single centralized game server configured to host a single instance of a dynamic, multi-user, network based game to establish a network based game environment containing identifications for a plurality of game participants, the game comprising integrated voice over internet protocol communication capabilities;
maintaining a game state profile for each one of the game participant identifications at the game server, each game state profile comprising game specific context for a given game participant identification;
~~using the game server to identify a plurality of groups of participant identifications based solely upon the maintained game state profiles, each group comprising a plurality of~~

~~participant identifications having within the game state profiles a shared game context comprising parameters or attributes that permit audio communication among the game participants associated with those participant identifications;~~

using solely the game server to send instructions to a conference server separate from the game server [[and]] to establish a plurality of simultaneous and independent voice over internet protocol based audio conferences within the network based game environment, all of the audio conferences contained within the single network based game instance, each audio conference comprising a group of participant identifications, each group comprising a plurality of participant identifications having a shared game context within the game state profiles comprising parameters or attributes that permit audio communication among the game participants associated with those participant identifications and audio paths between a plurality of geographically distributed audio mixers and communication devices associated with each game participant identification in that group;

~~associated with one of the identified groups of participant identifications and permitting audio communication for the participants associated with the associated group of participant identifications;~~

~~using the conference server to establish an audio path between a plurality of geographically distributed audio mixers and communication devices associated with each game participant in one of the audio conferences solely in response to the instructions sent from the game server, each audio mixer separate from the game participants, game server and conference server; and~~

using the [[established]] audio paths for the permitted audio communications among game participants; and

using the game server to switch participants among the audio conferences seamlessly and dynamically during the single network based game instance and non-disruptively to the single network based game instance and any of the audio conferences;

wherein the participant identifications in each group are selected by the game server based solely upon the maintained game state profiles the conference server used to

establish audio paths between the plurality of geographically distributed audio mixers and communication devices associated with each game participant in one of the audio conferences solely in response to the instructions sent from the game server, each audio mixer separate from the communication devices associated with the game participants, game server and conference server.

27. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein the game specific context comprises a common communication medium, membership in a group, telepathic connections or a shared language.

28. (Withdrawn) The computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein the step of maintaining a game state profile comprises maintaining a game state profile for each participant in each one of a plurality of distributed game servers associated with each participant.

29. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein at least one participant identification is simultaneously contained in at least two identified groups of participant identifications and the associated game participant participates simultaneously in at least two of the independent audio conferences.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 26, further comprising modifying one of the groups of participants based upon changes in the game state profiles of game participants in the group.

32. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 31, wherein the step of modifying the group of participants comprises removing participants or adding participants from the audio conference associated with that group of participants.

33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein each audio conference comprises a session initiation protocol based audio conference and the step of using the game server to switch participants among the audio conferences further comprises[[ing]] ~~dynamically switching at least one participant between two distinct groups~~ using session initiation protocol signaling messages to switch participants among the audio conferences.

35. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein the game server comprises a back-to-back user agent and maintains audio conferences on behalf of the game participants, instructing the conference server to set up each media path to point to the communication device of each game participant.

36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 26, further comprising identifying a feature vector between each pair of participants in each audio conference, each feature vector comprising direction and distance information between a given pair of participants; and

using the feature vectors to modify audio signals exchanged between pairs of participants within a given audio conference;

wherein the audio feature vector comprises information about distance, direction, communication medium, transmission frequency or transmission amplitude.

38. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim 37, further comprising modifying the audio feature vector in response to changes in the game state profiles of the audio conference participants.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein the game comprises a sports themed game.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein at least one participant identification is simultaneously contained in at least two identified groups of participant identifications and the associated game participant participates simultaneously in at least two of the independent audio conferences based on single shared contexts within the game state profile that comprises attributes separate from physical proximity among game participants within the game environment.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein the shared game context comprises attributes separate from physical proximity among game participants within the game environment.

42. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the step of using session initiation protocol signaling messages to switch participants among the audio conferences further comprises:

obtaining a signal description protocol at the game server from each game participant identification using session initiation protocol signaling messages; and

obtaining a signal description protocol at the game server for the conference server and each audio mixer using session initiation protocol signaling messages.

43. (New) The method of claim 43, further comprising:

obtaining audio path information for each game participant identification from its signal description protocol and communicating the obtained audio path information to the conference server and each audio mixer; and

obtaining audio path information for the conference server and each audio mixer from its signal description protocol and communication the obtain audio path information to the game participant identifications; and

using the communicated audio path information to establish the audio paths between the plurality of geographically distributed audio mixers and communication devices associated with each game participant identification in each group.